



Billing Code: 3510-22-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XD237

Marine Mammals; File No. 18438

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice; issuance of permit.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that a permit has been issued to Alaska SeaLife Center (ASLC; Responsible Party, Tara Jones, Ph.D.) 301 Railway Avenue, P.O. Box 1329, Seward, AK 99664, to conduct research on Steller sea lions (Eumetopias jubatus).

ADDRESSES: The permit and related documents are available for review upon written request or by appointment in the Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13705, Silver Spring, MD 20910; phone (301)427-8401; fax (301)713-0376.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Amy Sloan or Courtney Smith, (301)427-8401.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On April 17, 2014, notice was published in the Federal Register (79 FR 21735) that a request for a permit to conduct research on the species identified above had been submitted by the above-named applicant. The requested permit has been issued under the authority of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1361 et seq.), the regulations governing the taking and importing of marine mammals (50 CFR part 216), the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (ESA; 16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.), and the

regulations governing the taking, importing, and exporting of endangered and threatened species (50 CFR parts 222-226).

Permit No. 18438-00 authorizes the ASLC to conduct population monitoring and health, nutrition, and foraging studies on Steller sea lions in the western Distinct Population Segment in the Gulf of Alaska and Aleutian Islands. The ASLC is permitted to take Steller sea lions by disturbance associated with observations, sampling, and captures; remote biopsy; and capture, restraint, and sampling. Captured sea lions will undergo morphometric measurements, blood and tissue collection, digital imaging, hot-branding, body condition measurement, whisker, hair, and milk sampling, temporary marking, and ultrasound exams. Up to four unintentional mortalities are authorized per year. Marine mammals authorized to be incidentally disturbed include harbor seals (Phoca vitulina) and California sea lions (Zalophus californianus). The permit expires on August 31, 2019.

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.), NMFS has determined that the activities proposed are consistent with the Preferred Alternative in the Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for Steller Sea Lion and Northern Fur Seal Research (NMFS 2007), and that issuance of the permit would not have a significant adverse impact on the human environment.

As required by the ESA, issuance of this permit was based on a finding that such permit:
(1) was applied for in good faith; (2) will not operate to the disadvantage of such endangered species; and (3) is consistent with the purposes and policies set forth in section 2 of the ESA.

Dated: August 28, 2014.

Julia Harrison, Chief, Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources,
National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 2014-21016 Filed 09/03/2014 at 8:45 am; Publication Date: 09/04/2014]